



Then & Now

What They Said Needed To Be Done ... And ... What Governor Chris Christie Did

"ACROSS New Jersey, 2010 will be remembered as the year the lion roared and the very foundations of state government were shaken by the echo. Yes, it was the year Chris Christie charged into the office of governor with no apologies and began at once to change the state's political conversation as few have done in recent memory...

The Status Quo Has Been Shaken."

-- *The Record*, 12/31/2010

On The Need For Governor Christie To Follow Through On His Campaign Pledge To Remedy New Jersey's Ailing Fiscal Health

Then...

"...in a report by the Pew Center on the States, makes some illuminating points about the Garden State's fiscal quagmire...New Jersey's weaknesses are troubling in that they have relatively little to do with the recession. Rather, decades of bad management of state finances are mostly to blame...Its problem, as Pew notes, is a structural imbalance between what it spends and what it collects. And there's little room to raise more revenue: Taxes on property, income, businesses, and sales are all at or near the national ceiling..." ("Editorial: On Christie's plate," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11/23/2009)

"To underscore the need for action, a Pew Center on the States report...indicated New Jersey was a victim of "years of fiscal mismanagement (that) have resulted in soaring debt and a persistent imbalance between what the state collects and what it spends"...Christie has his work cut out for him... [There is] hope that someone in Trenton will finally take the steps needed to make New Jersey affordable again." ("Christie sends signal to unions," *Asbury Park Press*, 11/12/2009)

...Now

"Gov. Chris Christie is doing what he said he would do - slashing spending while not raising taxes...he has lived up to his pledges, and had every reason to believe that he was elected to do what he has done.."

("A budget that offers nothing to like - except an agreement," *Home News Tribune*, 6/26/2010)

"The fiscal measures that Christie has proposed are draconian, nasty . . . and absolutely necessary. They are absolutely necessary for reasons Christie cited in proposing the bitter fiscal medicine."
(TRENTONIAN EDITORIAL: Christie's NJ budget is draconian, necessary," The Trentonian, 3/18/2010)

"The details are ugly in some way for virtually every New Jerseyan. But from a broad-brush perspective, Christie is right that he is doing what he was elected to do, and more importantly, what New Jersey needs." ("State budget hurts, but it's the right treatment," Home News Tribune, 3/17/2010)

"...he is doing what he was elected to do. Mr. Christie's rationale is that, "We cannot spend money on everything we want." It's an approach refreshing in its simplicity and common sense."
(EDITORIAL: Cutting spending in N.J.," The Washington Times, 2/16/2010)

On The Need To Change The Out-Of-Control Government Spending That New Jersey Simply Can't Afford Anymore

Then...

"The state deficit is at least \$8 billion, about one-third of the overall budget. The state is burdened with \$31 billion in debt. Unemployment is at its highest level in a quarter-century, and tax collections are weak... Trenton can't afford its old spending habits..." ("Editorial: Christie era begins," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1/20/2010)

...Now

"The fiscal realities of New Jersey have to be faced. Governor Christie is to be lauded for setting the debate in New Jersey - there is no one who now questions the need to make drastic cuts...The budget...is but the first step in a very new direction...State government must shrink. County government must shrink. And many services on the local level must be either curtailed or eliminated."
(Almost there," The Record, 6/27/2010)

"New Jersey's tough new Republican governor is setting a national example for how to restore fiscal sanity...Unlike your average, big-spending Northeast politician, Christie actually had his eye on the long-term well-being of the state government when he took office in January... Christie is gutsy enough to handle the big-spending status quo-ists."
(A New Boss Rocks New Jersey," Investor's Business Daily Editorial, 5/27/2010)

"This day of reckoning has been years in the making. [Governor Christie] is on the tough but right course." ("Editorial: New Jersey's medicine," Philadelphia Inquirer, 3/17/2010)

"[Governor Chris Christie's] shock tactics may be what's needed to shake up old, hide-bound ways that waste our tax money at a time when we don't have a nickel to spare."
(Questioning N.J.'s authorities: Gov. Chris Christie Should Get Veto Power," Star-Ledger Editorial Board, 2/25/2010)

On The Need To Fix The Unsustainable New Jersey Public Workers' Pension & Benefit System That Governor Christie Inherited

Then...

"Christie now inherits this mess...The unfunded pension liability is a staggering \$34 billion, more than the annual state budget...He'll need time to come up with a muscular solution." ("Pension padding, again," The Star-Ledger, 11/19/2009)

"The problem here is the system. It was designed years ago to get as many people into the government pension system as possible when it should have been designed to restrict and limit the number of people who qualify to collect pensions. It was obviously designed with the best interest of government, not the taxpayers, in mind..." ("Tighten the reins on who gets pensions," Courier-Post, 12/28/2009)

...Now

"Gov. Christie started to deliver on his promise to bring fiscal sanity to Trenton by signing a public-pension reform measure that could save the state \$8 billion over the next 15 years... In one stroke of the pen on Monday, Christie upended two bits of conventional wisdom: One, that New Jersey could do nothing about exploding pension costs. Two, that a GOP governor couldn't work with a Democratic-controlled Legislature." ("Editorial: Christie's foothold," Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board, 3/26/2010)

"To prevent the pension well from eventually running dry for hundreds of thousands of retired public workers in New Jersey, changes must happen now...Gov. Chris Christie is right to pursue such changes. What other governors put off and were afraid to tackle head on, this governor is taking on in his usual full-steam-ahead manner..." ("Gov. Chris Christie Is Right To Pursue Such Changes," Courier-Post, 9/17/2010)

"For the first time in a generation, we have a governor who is willing to face reality on pension and health costs for public workers...The governor is asking only that public workers accept the kind of cutbacks that private sector employees were forced to swallow long ago...On the whole...the governor's pension plan is on the right track."

("On The Whole...The Governor's Pension Plan Is On The Right Track," The Star-Ledger Editorial Board, 9/19/2010)

On The Need For Governor Christie To Follow Through On His Pledge To Improve New Jersey's Economic and Business Climate

Then...

"Christie campaigned hard on the need to improve New Jersey's business climate, which the Tax Foundation again ranked worst in the nation this year. High taxes of all kinds — not just corporate taxes — have made it difficult for New Jersey businesses to remain competitive with neighboring states. Christie's plans to reduce red tape, to let temporary taxes on businesses expire and to reduce the cost of doing business in New Jersey are needed to help turn things around...Christie can't end the recession by himself. But he can, and must, follow through quickly on his goal of making New Jersey more business-friendly."

("N.J. businesses need a friend," Asbury Park Press, 11/30/2009)

...Now

"...business leaders by and large say they feel better about the direction of the state under Christie. And that's all anyone can really expect as a first step toward making New Jersey more business-friendly. Still, it's another sign of positive trends. And who can argue - much - with some of these initiatives: Budget-balancing through expense cuts rather than tax hikes. New Jersey had to adopt that approach, as painful as some of the cuts may be, and businesses will benefit; Establishing a committee to review red tape and speed application processes by eliminating redundancies and other needless obstacles. The goal is to ease overregulation...simple economics tells us that a healthier business climate provides benefits for the entire state. And Christie is on the right track in creating that climate. Even the governor's biggest critics should acknowledge that."

("Christie's been a friend to business - for everyone's benefit," Home News Tribune, 12/30/2010)

"...Christie never backed down from a seemingly unwinnable war, and has always done believed needed to be done to accomplish his goals. For that, businesses should cheer."

("A look back at the year of Christie," NJBIZ, 12/28/2010)

On The Need For Governor Christie To Follow Through On His Pledge To Restore The Health Of The Barnegat Bay

Then...

"The ball is now in Gov.-elect Chris Christie's court. Christie has pledged to do something about the plant's adverse impact on the bay ecology while at the same time maintaining the plant's economic viability. Those two things aren't necessarily mutually exclusive, despite Oyster Creek's protestations to the contrary. Plant owner/operator Exelon says it will be forced to close if it is required to build cooling towers...Oyster Creek isn't the only contributor to Barnegat Bay's problems. But it must do its fair share to resolve them. The DEP has started the clock ticking on cooling towers at Oyster Creek. Gov-elect Christie must not hit the snooze button." ("Cooling towers long overdue," Asbury Park Press, 1/11/2010)

...Now

"Big plans. Bold action. After decades of bluster and hand-wringing, and year after year of public officials standing idly by and watching Barnegat Bay dying, Gov. Chris Christie has unveiled an ambitious 10-point plan to save the troubled waterway. The proposal is a welcome and long-overdue attempt to combat years of neglect of one of New Jersey's most valuable natural resources. In his campaign for governor, Christie said fixing Barnegat Bay would be a priority...the plan is a major victory for those who have urged the state to finally take action...Christie has begun to take steps no chief executive in the state previously had been willing to take. ("A lifeline for the bay," Asbury Park Press, 12/11/2010)

"When Chris Christie campaigned for governor, he promised to protect Barnegat Bay from further degradation and to work to restore its health. With his signature Wednesday on three bills designed to do just that, he has gone a long way toward fulfilling that promise...New Jerseyans should be proud of the

nonpartisan, bipartisan spirit that went into the passage of these bills, and they should celebrate a new beginning for the state treasure that is Barnegat Bay." ("Boost for the Bay," Asbury Park Press, 1/6/2011)

On The Need For Municipalities To Have The Tools To Control Their Own Budgets Because The State Can No Longer Continue To Fit Their Bill

Then...

"The state's financial picture is grim. The federal government has already doled out hundreds of billions in stimulus aid. Taxpayers don't have another penny to give. Municipalities must find a way to even out benefits so they can cut their budgets without laying off workers." ("Stop the gravy train for municipal workers," Herald News, 12/3/2009)

...Now

"Last week, Christie introduced a 33-point package -- a tool kit, as it were, for the state, local municipalities, school districts, public colleges and other government bodies in New Jersey to rein in costs. The reforms Christie has offered are no joke...The current governor, just four months into office, has put forward bona fide reforms that could actually do the unimaginable and just maybe lower our highest-in-the-nation taxes. Imagine that...Overall, this is the most far-reaching and credible attempt we've seen to improve the financial health of the Garden State and fix the state's biggest problem -- repressively high taxes." ("Finally, Reforms Could Lower Taxes," Courier-Post, 5/16/2010)

"Talk to most mayors about controlling salary increases and by extension, property taxes, and many will blame the "arbitration system"...Gov. Chris Christie is trying to stop it. To coincide with the state's already-enacted 2 percent property tax cap, the governor proposed capping arbitration awards at 2 percent a year...This is a major breakthrough...This is relief municipalities badly need." ("Arbitration reform at long last," Daily Record, 12/11/2010)

On The Need For Education Reform That Improves The Quality Of Education In New Jersey

Then...

"Gov.-elect Chris Christie proved he was dead-serious about promised education reform...Today, it is the New Jersey Education Association that is out of step and lost in time. As Christie said last week, "Forget the 20th century, these folks are back in the 19th century in terms of their thinking"...The "dollars-follow-the-child" model, he says, would encourage low-cost, successful school districts to voluntarily admit children from failing, high-cost districts...the old days of kowtowing to the teachers' unions are over. Hopefully, the unions will become willing partners in developing new strategies to improve the quality of education for all New Jersey schoolchildren." ("New chapter in education," Asbury Park Press, 1/18/2010)

...Now

"Christie is right to pursue some necessary changes, and the union is only hurting itself by fighting the changes at every turn, losing public sentiment along the way."
(Christie, teachers need to get along," Asbury Park Press, 8/30/2010)

"...we note that the governor's zeal to reform public education is genuine and his willingness to tackle any obstacle refreshing." ("Education matters," The Record, 9/5/2010)

"...it's refreshing to see a politician who not only understands the need for serious education reform but is wholly committed to it — in action as well as words. Well done, governor."
(“Grade-A governor,” New York Post, 6/6/2010)

On The Need For Governor Christie To Follow Through On His Pledge To Be Committed To Environmental Friendly Policies

Then...

"New Jersey hasn't been doing its share to reduce the carbon emissions fueling climate change, not when you compare it to neighboring states. Recent efforts could reverse that trend, but the numbers suggest tough work ahead...Gov.-elect Chris Christie has made serious pledges in this area, and we urge him to follow through on those commitments... On paper, we like his commitment to clean energy through the development of solar farms and corporate business tax credits for wind turbine and manufacturing facilities. Let's see if he accomplishes those goals, all easier said than done with the cornucopia of problems facing state government." ("Cleaner air should remain a Jersey priority," Home News Tribune, 11/16/2009)

...Now

"Gov. Chris Christie last week steered the state closer to the vanguard of energy production as he signed a law intended to foster offshore wind power...The governor rightly sees state incentives to attract private companies to make the tools that will eventually harvest the wind as a much better alternative to offshore drilling or prospecting for natural gas off the state's coast...We're grateful New Jersey is among that forward-thinking number." ("Here's the wind, and the pitch," Trenton Times, 8/26/2010)

"The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey took the first step toward getting trash off the roads...The transfer station should be open for business by 2013, and will take 180,000 trucks off New Jersey roads, half of the total coming from New York...This is big win for the region. It will significantly ease the burden on the state's roads and bridges, while leaving our air a bit cleaner. Gov. Chris Christie deserves credit for urging the Port Authority to buy the Greenville Yards, and rightly calling out the trash trucks for "making the quality of life worse" for New Jersey residents."
(“A welcome step toward getting garbage-hauling trucks off New Jersey highways,” Star-Ledger Editorial Board, 5/19/2010)

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